

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

FILE NAME: 266 Seventh Street East and 255 Sixth Street East
DATE OF APPLICATION: March 20, 2013
APPLICANT: Dave Brooks, 9 & 19 Properties LLC
OWNER: same
DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING: April 25, 2013
HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District
CATEGORY: Pivotal and Non-Contributing
CLASSIFICATION: Building permit
STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Christine Boulware
DATE: April 18, 2013

A. SITE DESCRIPTION:

The O'Connor Building at **266 Seventh Street East** is a four-story, six-bay, brick building that features a combination of Queen Anne and Italian Renaissance Revival style elements. The building was designed by Emil Ulrici and constructed in 1887. The division of bays on the second through fourth stories is highlighted by cut stone pilasters. Cut stone lintels extend beyond the edges of the window frames to the pilasters, creating a polychromatic grid-like effect. The top sash of every window has Queen Anne style lights. The building has a bracketed, galvanized metal cornice with modillion blocks and the words "O'Connor" pressed into the frieze. Above the cornice are a simple balustrade and two gabled dormer-like projections which appear as if they were ornamental rather than functional dormers since they never had window openings. The second and third story windows of the central four bays are grouped under a cornice and between pilasters. The third story windows in this grouping are round-arched with moulded brick keystones. There is a small balcony at the level of the central windows of the third floor, reminiscent of the architecture of Renaissance Italy. The property is categorized as pivotal to the Lowertown Historic District.

The building at **255 Sixth Street East** is located on the northwest corner of Wall and Sixth streets. This six-story commercial building houses four levels of parking, two upper levels of office space. The National Register Nomination for Lowertown describes this building as an addition to the 1905 Classical Revival style warehouse to the west. The George Sommers and Company Building (now River Park Lofts) was designed by J. Walter Stevens with brown brick walls and a simple cubic design that is devoid of much ornamentation; a contrast to the row of J. Walter Stevens early Victorian buildings on the north side of Mears Park. In the mid-1970's Control Data Corporation acquired and renovated this building (prior to designation as a local and National Register Historic District) at a cost of six million which was a major stimulus to revitalization efforts in Lowertown.

At some point the 1905 and the 1970's structures were sold to separate entities however, the parking for the River Park Lofts is located within the 1970's structure and owned by River Park Lofts. This creates somewhat of a structure within a structure. The building is categorized as non-contributing.

B. PROPOSED CHANGES:

The applicant proposes to construct a skyway bridge twenty-two feet over the public alley between the two buildings. This is a required third egress for the event center on the top floors of the parking garage. An exit door would be cut through the wall of the parking garage and a door would be installed in a second floor window opening at the rear of the O'Connor Building. The new 4' metal door and frame will have a dark bronze finish. The bridge would be metal frame with metal mesh-grate and metal guard rails; all in a dark bronze finish. The guard rail design is proposed with pickets, a sunburst pattern and decorative sign.

C. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:

ARTICLE VI. - HISTORIC LOWERTOWN HERITAGE PRESERVATION DISTRICT

Lowertown Historic District Design Review Guidelines, Sec. 74-112

Guidelines for Design Review

I. New construction. The basic principle for new construction in the Lowertown area is to maintain the scale and character of present buildings. New construction refers to totally new structures, moved in structures, and new additions to existing structures undergoing restoration and rehabilitation.

Architectural diversity is characteristic of Lowertown. When first confronted with this variety, it is easy to overlook the overall thread of continuity of the area. Generally, any structure should provide height, massing, setback, materials and rhythm compatible to surrounding structures. The reproduction of historic design and details is expensive, artificial, and is recommended only for some cases of infill or other small scale construction. Guidelines for new construction focus on general rather than specific design elements in order to encourage architectural innovation.

Rhythm and directional emphasis. The rhythm and directional emphasis in Lowertown can be found both in the relation of several buildings to each other and in the relation of the elements on a single building facade.

Rhythm between buildings is usually distinguished by slight variations in height, windows and doors, and details, including vertical and horizontal elements. Rhythm may, as in the case of Park Square Court, be accentuated by slight projections and recessions of the facade, causing the scale of the building to match that of its neighbors. The rhythm and directional emphasis of the new construction should be compatible with that of existing adjacent structures.

Materials and detail. The materials of new construction should relate to the materials and details of existing adjacent buildings. New buildings in the district should provide more detailing than typical modern commercial buildings, to respond to the surrounding buildings and to reinforce the human scale of the district. Walls of buildings in the district are generally of brick, or occasionally of stone. All non-masonry surfaces, if painted, should be of colors compatible with the masonry character of the district.

Windows and doors. Windows should relate to those of existing buildings in the district in terms of solid to opening ratio, distribution of window openings, and window setback. In most of the buildings in the district, the area of openings is between 30% and 50% of the facade wall. The proportion, size and detailing of windows and doors in new construction should relate to that of existing adjacent buildings. Double-hung windows are traditional in the district, and are preferred for new construction. Window mullions should emphasize their vertical direction. Casement windows and horizontal sliding windows are not historically common, and because they were not usually used in commercial district are not preferred for new construction. Window and door frames should be wood, appropriately colored, or baked enamel finish aluminum or vinyl-clad.

II. Restoration and rehabilitation.

General Principles for Restoration and Rehabilitation

All work should be of a character and quality that maintain the distinguishing features of the building and the environment. The removal of architectural features is not permitted.

Deteriorated architectural features such as cornices, chimneys and roof treatment, window and door openings, and exterior surface treatment should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event of replacement, new materials should match the original in composition, design, color, texture and appearance. Duplication of the original design based on

physical or pictorial evidence is preferable to using conjectural or "period" designs or using part of other buildings.

Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship characteristic of structures of a period should be treated sensitively. Furthermore, if changes in use of a building are contemplated, they should be accomplished with minimum alteration to the structure and fabric.

In general it is expected that buildings will be restored to their original appearance. However, alterations to buildings are sometimes worthy of preservation because they reflect a significant period of history of the buildings and the district. This significance should be respected and restoration to an "original" appearance may not always be desirable. All buildings should be recognized as products of their own time and not be altered to resemble buildings from another era.

A. Masonry and walls.

Use of materials: Original masonry and mortar should be retained whenever possible without the application of any surface treatment. A similar material should be used to repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated masonry. New masonry added to the structure or site, such as new foundations or retaining walls, should be compatible with the color, texture, and bonding of the original or existing masonry. Formstone, stucco, wood or metal siding or paneling should not be used.

Repointing: Repointing should only be done on those mortar joints where there is evidence of moisture problems or when sufficient mortar is missing to allow water to stand on the mortar joint. Using pneumatic hammers to move mortar can seriously damage the adjacent brick. Vertical joints should be hand chiseled. When repointing, it is important to use the same materials as the existing mortar. This includes matching the color, texture, coefficients of expansion and contraction, and ingredient ratio of the original mortar mix, creating a bond similar to the original. A professional mortar analysis can give this information. Repointing with Portland cement mortar may create a bond stronger than is appropriate for the building materials, possibly resulting in cracking or other damage. Old mortar should be duplicated in joint size, method of applications and joint profile.

B. Windows and doors.

Openings: Existing window and door openings should be retained. New window and door openings should not be introduced into the principal visible elevations. Enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit stock window sash or new stock door sizes should not be done. Infilling of window openings may be permissible on minor facades if standard sizes approximate the size and proportions of the opening. Generally, a minor facade will be considered as any facade not facing the street and not having the ornamentation and higher quality materials usually associated with street facades.

Panes, Sashes and Hardware: It is desirable to retain original windows and doors, but they may need replacement for functional reasons. Replacement is clearly acceptable for functional reasons if new materials closely match original materials. Different materials may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis. Window panes should be two-way glass. No reflective glass is permitted. The stylistic period or periods a building represents should be respected. Shutters are generally inappropriate in the district. Missing or irreparable windows should be replaced with new windows that match the original in material, size, general muntin and mullion proportion and configuration and reflective qualities of the glass. Replacement sash should not alter the setback relationship between window and wall. Heating and air conditioning units should not be installed in the window frames when the sash and frames may be damaged.

Window installations should be considered only when all other viable heating and cooling systems would result in significant damage to historic materials. Window installations may be acceptable in minor facades.

Lintels, arches and sills: Lintels, sills, architraves, pediments, hoods and steps should be retained or repaired if possible. Existing colors and textures should be matched when repairing these elements.

Storefronts: Existing storefronts should be retained and repaired including windows, sash, doors, transoms, signage, and decorative features where such features contribute to the architectural and historic character of the building. Where original or early storefronts no longer exist or are too deteriorated to save, the commercial character of the building should be retained through: 1) contemporary design which is compatible with the scale, design, materials, color and texture of the historic buildings; or 2) an accurate restoration of the storefront based on historical research and physical evidence. Storefronts or new design elements on the ground floor, such as arcades, should not be introduced which alter the architectural and historic character of the building and its relationship with the street or its setting or which cause the destruction of significant historic fabric. Materials which detract from the historic or architectural character of the building, such as mirrored glass, should not be used. Entrances through significant storefronts should not be altered.

(Ord. No. 17120, § 2, 3-22-84)

D. FINDINGS:

1. On March 22, 1984, the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17120, § 2. The Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and approval or denial of applications for city permits for exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4).
2. **Classification of the buildings.** The O'Connor Building is classified as pivotal to the architectural character and integrity of the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District; the parking garage/event center is categorized as non-contributing.
3. The construction of an egress door at the parking garage/event center is proposed on a secondary elevation of a non-contributing building. Elevation and section plans were not provided to illustrate what the opening and materials will look like or what size they will be. The construction of this opening will not result in the alteration or loss of any historic materials or details. The egress door and opening will not have a negative impact on the historic district so long as the *proportion, size and detailing... relate to that of existing adjacent buildings.*
4. The introduction of a door into a window opening is proposed at the rear of the O'Connor building. The window is located on the second story above the mostly intact, first floor loading/store fronts. The guideline states that *a minor facade will be considered as any facade not facing the street and not having the ornamentation and higher quality materials usually associated with street facades.* Although not as decorative as the street facing elevation, the rear elevation does retain ornamentation at the first floor openings. The window openings above are unadorned with stone lintels and brick arched headers.
5. Elevation and section plans were not provided to illustrate what the opening and materials will look like or what size they will be in the window opening on the rear elevation of the O'Connor Building. The guideline states that *enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit stock window sash or new stock door sizes should not be done.* The guideline further states, *lintels, sills, architraves, pediments, hoods and steps should be retained or repaired if possible.* More information will need to be provided to determine

compliance with the guidelines. The alteration of one window on a minor façade seems acceptable.

6. A metal bridge is proposed twenty-two feet over the alley between the parking garage/event center and the O'Conner Building. The proposed bridge is not a traditional feature in the Lowertown Historic District. The feature that it most resembles is the fire escape/fire stairs. The O'Connor Building has retained its fire escape at the rear elevation. Guidelines for the Hill historic district state, *firestair additions may be acceptable in some cases, but should be kept to the rear of buildings where they will be the most inconspicuous and detract the least from the historical context. The detailing of decks and exterior stairs should be compatible with the period and style of the building.* The bridge is proposed at the rear of the buildings. It's method of attachment to the O'Connor Building was not illustrated. If the proposed design were modified to be more utilitarian, simple picket and rail design, and blend in with the fire escape, it would comply with the guideline.
7. The proposal will not have an adverse affect on the program for the preservation and architectural control of the Historic Lowertown Heritage Preservation District (Leg. Code §73.06 (e)) provided the conditions are met.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the findings, staff recommends approval of the application provided the following conditions are met:

1. This approval is contingent on the approval of the vacation of the air rights.
2. This approval is contingent on the appropriate easements being filed and recorded with Ramsey County.
3. Required lighting fixtures and locations shall be submitted to HPC staff for final review and approval.
4. Materials and details for doors and frames, as well as scaled and dimensioned elevation and section plans for these openings and the bridge, shall be submitted to HPC staff for final review and approval.
5. The height and width of the window opening on the O'Connor building shall not be altered.
6. The metal egress bridge shall have a utilitarian design to be more consistent with the design and details of the fire escape on the back of the O'Connor Building.
7. The metal egress bridge shall be attached to the rear elevation of the O'Connor Building through mortar joints as much as possible. The attachment of the bridge should not alter or destroy any decorative features of the rear, first floor "storefront."
8. Final material colors and finishes shall be submitted to staff for review and approval. There shall be no shiny metal finishes; they should be dark and matte.
9. Any revisions to the approved plans shall be submitted to staff and/or the HPC.
10. The stamped approved plans shall remain on site for the duration of the project along with the HPC conditional approval letter.

G. ATTACHMENTS:

1. Applications with photos and plans



Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission
Department of Planning and Economic Development
25 Fourth Street West, Suite 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102
Phone: (651) 266-9078

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION

This application must be completed in addition to the appropriate city permit application if the affected property is an individually designated landmark or located within an historic district. For applications that must be reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission refer to the HPC Meeting schedule for meeting dates and deadlines.

1. CATEGORY

Please check the category that best describes the proposed work

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Rehabilitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign/Awning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction/Addition/
Alteration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence/Retaining Wall | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Application Review Only |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

2. PROJECT ADDRESS

Street and number: 266 7TH ST E Zip Code: 55101

3. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of contact person: DAVE BROOKS

Company: 9 & 19 PROPERTIES LLC

Street and number: 366 JACKSON ST

City: ST PAUL State: MN Zip Code: 55101

Phone number: (651) 270-3198 e-mail: _____

4. PROPERTY OWNER(S) INFORMATION (If different from applicant)

Name: SAME

Street and number: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone number: (____) _____ e-mail: _____

5. PROJECT ARCHITECT (If applicable)

Contact person: DAVID L. GLEESON

Company: GLEESON ARCHITECTS

Street and number: 1175 HWY 96 E

City: ST PAUL State: MINN Zip Code: 55107

Phone number: (651) 765-9203 e-mail: dgleeson@gleesonarchitects.com

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completely describe ALL exterior changes being proposed for the property. Include changes to architectural details such as windows, doors, siding, railings, steps, trim, roof, foundation or porches. Attach specifications for doors, windows, lighting and other features, if applicable, including color and material samples.

CONNECT REQUIRED 3RD EXIT SKYWAY TO REAR OF BUILDING 22' ABOVE GRADE. SKYWAY BRIDGE WILL BE METAL FRAME WITH METAL MESH GRATE & METAL GUARD RAIL ALL TO BE DARK BRONZE. GUARD RAIL WILL HAVE DEL. SIGN WITH IN THE DESIGN. NEW 4' MET DOOR/FRAME DARK BRONZE TO MATCH BLDG.

Attach additional sheets if necessary

7. ATTACHMENTS

Refer to the *Design Review Process sheet* for required information or attachments.

****INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE RETURNED****

ARE THE NECESSARY ATTACHMENTS AND INFORMATION INCLUDED?

☒ YES

Will any federal money be used in this project?

YES

NO

Are you applying for the Investment Tax Credits?

YES

NO

I, the undersigned, understand that the Design Review Application is limited to the aforementioned work to the affected property. I further understand that any additional exterior work to be done under my ownership must be submitted by application to the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission. Any unauthorized work will be required to be removed.

Signature of applicant: David Brooks Date: _____

Signature of owner: David Brooks Date: 3/20/13

FOR HPC OFFICE USE ONLY

Date received: 3-20-13

FILE NO. 13-023

District: LT /Individual Site: _____

Contributing/Non-contributing/Pivotal/Supportive/:

Type of work: Minor/Moderate/Major

____ Requires staff review

Supporting data: YES NO
Complete application: YES NO

The following condition(s) must be met in order for application to conform to preservation program:

It has been determined that the work to be performed pursuant to the application does not adversely affect the program for preservation and architectural control of the heritage preservation district or site (Ch.73.06).

HPC staff approval

Date _____

☒ Requires Commission review

Submitted:

- ☐ 3 Sets of Plans
- ☐ 15 Sets of Plans reduced to 8 1/2" by 11" or 11" by 17"
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ City Permit Application
- ☐ Complete HPC Design Review application

Hearing Date set for: 4.25.13

City Permit # _____ - _____











